

Administrative Philosophy

My philosophy is that an administrator must be the biggest advocate for her/his faculty, staff and students. I believe in being in the background, constantly finding ways and means to facilitate their growth and progress. An administrator must be in constant communication with each faculty member, be in tune with their interest and mission, and be their champion and mentor; regular one-to-one administrator and faculty contact is critical. Only through this learning process can one positively influence faculty performance, appropriately identify and reward faculties, and provide faculty the right encouragement, means, and opportunities to strengthen their programs. I embrace and encourage diversity and believe in exploiting individual strengths as opposed to a “one-size-fits-all” philosophy. Transparency, honesty and fairness are part and parcel for this formula to work. My philosophy is that “one faculty’s success is the entire department’s gain”.

Besides nurturing individual strengths, an administrator must promote systematic program coordination among faculty within the department and university-wide. Information, incentives and opportunities must be made available to foster faculty team dynamics and synergies, to identify “areas of excellence” and encourage team work in order to achieve greater efficiency and funding success. Present day science demands that expertise be merged in order to be successful. This team work concept extends beyond research; there must be synergism among research, academic programs and extension service/outreach. The Department of Nutrition and Food Science has a very diverse clientele; this also means that well-positioned to receive a great deal of support from the industry. We must engage key industries in the program, by soliciting their input, explore internship training opportunities for our students, and funding opportunities. An administrator must represent the department to not only industry groups but also to state and federal agencies/organizations.

In decision making, I believe in shared governance. It is important to solicit input from faculty, staff and students. Once input has been gathered, a decision must be made, no matter how difficult or unpopular. A decision is seldom wrong if it based on the “long term health and growth” of the department. Also, an administrator must have a proven track record. I believe in “leading by example”. I believe in hard work and in efficient work habits. I have served as a faculty member for over 34 years; I have a proven track record for excellence in both research and teaching, and I have participated in numerous successful outreach programs. Last, but not least, I served as a department chair in the Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition at Washington State University. An administrator’s greatest reward is to be a part of a group of successful faculty, working together to serve their clientele.

Vision for the Department: My overall vision for the Department of Nutrition and Food Science is to have each and every faculty member be successful and productive in her/his program, and be excited to come to work every day. The Department of Nutrition and Food Science, Texas A&M University, already has several areas of excellence. I envision the department to continue to encourage and grow these areas of excellence, and to identify other critical “present day” food and nutrition areas to address, and be relevant with the time. I envision faculty “hungry to work” and “hungry to work together”, and collectively tackling nutrition and foods issues relevant to the health issues, meeting the needs of the food industry to make them more competitive, and educating, inspiring, and challenging students to the limit of their ability.